

## AIPAC SPEECH 2013 – MINISTER OF DEFENSE

### EHUD BARAK (2,281 WORDS) – DRAFT 6

- Thank you for such a warm welcome.
- What an indescribable feeling to be once again surrounded by so many **true friends** in the capital of the world's greatest democracy.
- Members of the Administration, Members of Congress, Ambassadors Michael Oren and Dan Shapiro, distinguished ambassadors from all around the world.... Michael, Rosey, Bob, David, Howard and Richard, AIPAC members... older and young...
- Good evening to **you all** and thank you for having me.
- Members of Congress, if **only** I had time to thank you all individually... but there are **more** congressmen and women here than could fill our whole Knesset! **But** I am certainly **not** complaining...
- It is **your** toil and **your** graft – **your** unwavering support – that keeps **us** safe. I have six humble words for all of you: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

- I would like to express my personal appreciation to President Obama and Secretary Panetta for their **resolute** backing of Israel.
- History will surely record your immeasurable contribution to the **strength** of Israel and the maintenance of the **truly** special relationship between our peoples.
- On behalf of the people of Israel, I wish Secretary Hagel **all the best** in his new role.
- I have no doubt that as Secretary of Defense he will **serve his country** with the **same pride** and **honor** with which he served both on the battlefield and in Congress.
- Moving from the Hill – down to the grassroots, the young activists we see – and hear – in this room today: **You are the future!**
- When I speak to young American supporters of Israel, it is the **depth** of your **commitment** that is so uplifting.
- A **commitment** which is so lucidly **dictated** by the **head**... yet so deeply underpinned by the **heart**...
- A commitment to ideals, which in the age of Facebook and Twitter could be brushed quietly into

a corner, is LOUDLY on show this evening. **You are the future!**

- The display of **united strength** and **solidarity** in the **face** of determined enemies is crucial to both **win wars...** and **maintain peace**.
- Very **few** figures have embodied the strength and solidarity I am talking about more than my friend **Dan Inouye**. Dan – **may his memory be blessed** – was a **true hero** of democracy. A **passionate friend** of Israel. And a **dear friend** to me.
- As we say in Hebrew – **אתה חסר חבר** – you are... and will be missed. Thank you for everything Dan.
- It is as a direct result of the efforts of people like Dan in Congress, as well as you – all across America – that our alliance is **stronger than ever**.
- It is thanks to the **rock solid** US-Israel relationship, our capacity to defend ourselves, that is to say - Israel's 'Qualitative – Military – Edge', has been guaranteed for years to come!

- With **US** support and the **ingenuity** of our R&D personnel, Israel finds itself at the cutting edge of missile defense technology.
- We have an Israeli designed system – the ‘Iron Dome’ – which recently intercepted over 400 incoming terrorist rockets. Shot them out of the sky!
- It is the equivalent of hitting a bullet with a bullet!
- Just last week on the shores of the Mediterranean, we – the US **and** Israel – conducted a successful exo-atmospheric flight test of the new Arrow 3 interceptor. This will shoot ballistic missiles out of space!
- The State of Israel simply would not be **the strong island of stability** without one crucial **constant**.
- YOU
- The United States of America. Its people. Its leadership. Its Jewish community.
- The US and Israel are more than friends. We are family. We look **after** each other. And we will continue to look **out** for each other.

- We live in a tough neighborhood.
- I will never grow tired of repeating these harsh realities: Where we live, there is no mercy for the weak. There is no second chance for those who cannot defend themselves.
- Israel is the strongest country in the region and the only genuinely open democracy; a “villa in the jungle” as I once called it.
- We have witnessed an **unprecedented geopolitical earthquake** in the last three years – shattering the generations’ old regional order.
- There are two clear lessons and one insight I have observed during this period of transition:
  - Lesson number 1: We must be modest with our predictions, especially in regard to the future. Take Egypt as an example; even Mubarak was taken by surprise, and he faced the consequences. Who saw it coming?

- Lesson 2: When allies and friends – as well as certain leaders back home tell me: **Don't worry...** If worse comes to worst – the world **will not stand idly by** – the world will come forward and act!
- My answer is: Do NOT take this for granted.
- Look at North Korea – repeatedly defying the whole world, even testing its nuclear weapons.
- Look at Syria – you need no intelligence; it's on your screens. Assad's Jet fighters, tanks and artillery are slaughtering his own citizens. Bulldozers dig trenches into which the bodies of children, women and early are piled. Over 70,000 Syrians killed. All of this has not ensured a sense of direction, unity of purpose, or potential will to act and put an end to all of this.
- The world remains inactive.
- And an **insight...**

- Many of our best friends in the world, as well as colleagues in Israel, are concerned that the root cause – the underlying reason – for *all* the problems in the Middle East... is our inability to solve the conflict with the Palestinians.
- I say... That's not true!
- Looking at the last three years in the Middle East, it is clear that we are witnessing historic developments which go well beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Even if a peace agreement with the Palestinians had been signed and sealed a long time ago:
  - Iran would still be pursuing nuclear capabilities and a hegemonic role in the Gulf
  - The Muslim Brotherhood would still have come to power in Egypt
  - Syria would still be mired in a bloody civil war
- Having said that, however, and it is a **big however**; the peace process certainly should not be ignored.
- And I'll come back to this in a moment...
- But **first**, a question: What is the greatest challenge facing the world, facing the region and

נראה לי הגיוני ללכת מגדול – facing Israel today (קטן)?...

- It is Iran –  **racing** towards nuclear weapons.
- A nuclear Iran spells the end of **any** conceivable non-proliferation regime. **Saudi Arabia, Turkey** and later on **Egypt** will eventually follow suit.
- The countdown towards nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists will begin.
- Iran will increase its **sponsorship** of **terror** all over the world. Their global proxies – including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip, will become emboldened.
- We **cannot** forget that this extreme regime also threatens to wipe Israel **out the pages of history**.
- Diplomatic efforts continue, yet based on past experience... they appear to be headed towards a futile deadlock.
- Sanctions are **unprecedented and hurting**, but to tell you frankly – while of course we must exhaust all diplomatic means – I do not believe they will

bring a moment of truth where the Ayatollahs will give up their nuclear aspiration.

- Therefore **all options must remain** on the table.
- We have stated this time and again.
- And we expect all those who say it... to mean it... ladies and gentlemen... **We mean it.**
- And I repeat it once again, **we mean it.**
- A nuclear Iran is the most imminent and acute danger to the stability of the **entire region.** But it is not the only one.
- There are another two:
- Islamic fundamentalist terror is spreading rapidly.
- Likewise Missile Defense is becoming a growing need for other moderate states in the region
- So what is to be done?
- **We are currently in a transition period in** (OR IT IS AN INTEREGNUM) Israel and the new government

will have to shape its own approach – but allow me, just before I leave, to share with you my analysis.

- The Middle East is a **Gestalt** – everything depends on everything else.
- Facing the triangle of threats we should:
- Number 1) Find a way to start building a **‘Regional Security Framework’**...
- This would be built around the **common** challenges – of **radical Islamic terror**, **border security**, **missile defense**... and of course, the **threat** of Iran’s nuclear program and its hegemonic intentions.
- Led by the US, such a **‘Regional Security Framework’** could provide a **host of synergies** for all its regional participants.
- Number 2) We need a **daring peace initiative** vis-a-vis the Palestinians can serve as **the platform upon which the regional actors can unite**.
- A two-state solution is the only viable solution.
- It is a compelling imperative for us in order to secure our identity and future as a Jewish and democratic state; not a favor we are doing for the Palestinians... it is in our own self interest.

- Believe me I know from personal experience that the Palestinians are not **easy** partners for peace.
- They hold the lion's share of the responsibility for past failures.
- Well, I know a fully fledged agreement is probably not feasible – and only an assertive, sincere effort can determine this – if this is the case; we have to try and achieve a reasonable, fair, **interim agreement**.
- I strongly believe this is possible – while guaranteeing our security and vital interests.
- But **if even** an **interim** agreement is unobtainable, then we should consider **unilateral actions** in order to place a wedge on this dangerous slippery slope towards a **binational** state.
- It involves **demarcating** a line within the land of Israel... Within which we incorporate the settlement blocs and a **solid** Jewish majority for generations to come.
- Setting security arrangements and a solid Israeli, long-term **military presence** along the River Jordan

- **Rest assured**... our security should not – AND WILL NOT – be compromised under any of these alternatives.
- Tough decisions must be taken; **but peace is possible**.
- And as our sages taught us: “*If not now... **when?***”
- President Abbas – **now is the time** to start talking!
- I **strongly** believe that this interconnected policy triangle:
  - (1) the Regional Security Framework ... (2) a resumed political process with the Palestinians... and (3) tackling Iran.
- This is the most effective approach to deal with the challenges on our horizon.
- Israel, surrounded by this geopolitical earthquake, has been experiencing its own tremors of change: A **renaissance** of political **activism**, an **outburst** of **social participation**.
- Just under two years ago we witnessed the people of Israel taking to the streets... demanding a redistribution of the economic and social burden: A fairer slicing of the pie.

- Just last month – **no less than 53** new members of the Knesset were sworn in. That is nearly 50% of the serving members of Knesset ... (Present company included!)... **OUT.**
- **That** is what I call democracy in action. A democracy *I* can be proud of. A democracy *you* can be proud of.
- Ladies and gentlemen, I was born 71 years ago at the height of World War Two, when the **??? Started to work at full capacity.**
- And now I am finishing my tenure as the Minister of Defense of an **independent Jewish state.**
- I fought for my **country for decades, I served as Chief of Staff ????????**
- I often rub my eyes in disbelief when I look at what we – as a nation – have achieved... all in under 65 years.
- We have an **agile** and **adaptive** high-tech and export oriented economy.
- Our start-up culture flourishes on an **eruption** of talent and an underlying entrepreneurial spirit amongst our youth.
- The future is bright, and **my vision for Israel is clear.**

- A **strong**, self-confident, flourishing Jewish, democratic state, living in peace and security with its neighbors.
- An exemplary **state** and world leader in science, technology, education, culture, infrastructure, quality of life and, finally, standard of living.
- A country in which our children will **want** to live.
- A country which you – our family abroad – will want to be associated with.
- A **pillar of pride** which you and **your ????** can look at and say: That is our Jewish Home.
- Ladies and gentlemen, we are at a **decisive juncture in our history...**
- May we have the **strength** and **courage** to make those tough decisions for the future **peace** and **security** of the State of Israel.

השם עוז לעמו ייתן, השם יברך את עמו בשלום

- May the Lord bestow his people with courage, and may the Lord bless his people with peace.

- We are in this boat together... *and America*, there is simply no other nation on earth with which we would rather share the ride.
- Thank you...